

Numbers 27 - Thursday, February 3rd, 2011

- Given that it's been a couple of weeks since the last time we were in the book of Numbers, it's important to understand the backstory.
- The Israelites are about to enter the Promised Land, and Jericho will be the first place that they will have to enter into battle at.
- Chiefly this is the reason for the second census we studied about two weeks ago in chapter 26 when we compared it to the first census.

- While there is prophetic significance in the difference between the first and second census, it also had militarily significance for battle.
- Right out of the shoot, there's a lesson in this; sometimes the promises of God come packaged with the spiritual battles along the way.
- Now, here in chapter 27 we see how the conquered land will be divided among the sons, which explains what's in the first few verses.

27:1 Then came the daughters of Zelophehad the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, from the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph; and these were the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 2 And they stood before Moses, before Eleazar the priest, and before the leaders and all the congregation, by the doorway of the tabernacle of meeting, saying: 3 "Our father died in the wilderness; but he was not in the company of those who gathered together against the LORD, in company with Korah, but he died in his own sin; and he had no sons. 4 Why should the name of our father be removed from among his family because he had no son? Give us a possession among our father's brothers."

- Here we have a dilemma that is presented to Moses by the daughters of Zelophehad as it relates to having no sons to possess the land.
- It's interesting to note that in the pleading of their case before Moses, there's no hint of complaining, or accusing God of being unfair.
- It's important to understand that this is how it is in the modern day Middle-Eastern culture today. Only the sons get the inheritance.
- Be that as it may, they actually had a valid argument and, as we see next, the case that they are bringing before Moses did have merit.

5 So Moses brought their case before the LORD.

- This is one of those places where we first, need to see what's "not" here in order to better understand what it is that we do see here.
- Conspicuously absent from the narrative is Moses responding to them with what it is that they should do. He takes it right to the Lord.
- Here's what I'm thinking; this kind of request needs to be taken to the Lord, whereas sometimes we already know what God's will is.
- In those cases, we may not even need to pray because God's Word is already clear on the matter. This issue however, is not so clear.

- There's something else here that can be easily missed at first glance, notice how they are exercising faith that they will enter the land.
- In other words, if they didn't really believe, by faith, that they would enter the Promised Land, they wouldn't have asked in the first place.
- Also, in exercising their faith, they go to the right place and stand before Moses, the priests and leaders at the door of the tabernacle.

- Now, on the other side of this, I can't help but be impressed with how Moses responds, or better said, doesn't respond to their request.
- Notice he doesn't have an answer for them but takes it right to the Lord. You'd think after 40 years, he would be the Bible answer man.
- Often times, we do err when we try to have all the answers instead of simply saying; "I don't know, but I will ask the One Who does."
- One said it best when they wrote; "It's not what we know that counts, It's who we know that counts." Moses knows the One Who knows.

6 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 7 "The daughters of Zelophehad speak what is right; you shall surely give them a possession of inheritance among their father's brothers, and cause the inheritance of their father to pass to them.

- At first glance, it seems the Lord's response is an admission of their being right, and God being wrong. Obviously this isn't the case.
- I would suggest to you that the Lord wants us to learn how to seek Him. In other words, ambiguity and uncertainty propels us to Him.
- We'll see this come into clearer focus in the next verses, but suffice it to say, there does come a time when we need to seek the Lord.

8 And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a man dies and has no son, then you shall cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter. 9 If he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers. 10 If he has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his father's brothers. 11 And if his father has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to the relative closest to him in his family, and he shall possess it.'" And it shall be to the children of Israel a statute of judgment, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

- Here we see God's response to them and it is most favorable, so much so, He will reward them for it, because He is so pleased by it.
- Perhaps it goes without saying but, anytime we have even a mustard seed sized faith, God is pleased and will reward us for it.

Hebrews 11:6 KJV But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

- The answer they receive from the Lord is not only that the daughters can have the inheritance but, that they can keep it in the family.
- This is Who and how God is. He always gives us exceedingly abundantly above and beyond anything that we could think or imagine.
- Also, this is a good example of how God's judgments are always righteous, just and fair. Often times, He gives us more than we ask.

Revelation 15:3 KJV And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of saints.

12 Now the LORD said to Moses: "Go up into this Mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the children of Israel. 13 And when you have seen it, you also shall be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was gathered. 14 For in the Wilderness of Zin, during the strife of the congregation, you rebelled against My command to hallow Me at the waters before their eyes." (These are the waters of Meribah, at Kadesh in the Wilderness of Zin.

- The Lord tells Moses to "go up into this Mount Abarim," which is a mountain range 50 miles in length with Mt. Nebo as the highest point.
- I've been on Mt. Nebo, which is in modern day Jordan, and from this point you have a view of Israel as far as the eye can see.
- It is for this reason that God will take him to this location. He wants Moses to see the Promised-Land even though he can't enter it.

- At first glance it may appear that God is being cruel by letting him see the Promised-Land, while reminding him he won't enter in it.
- He even reminds Moses the reason that he won't enter in is because he struck the rock twice at Meribah and ruined the typology.
- I would suggest that instead of God being mean and rubbing it in He's actually being gracious and blessing Moses by letting him see in.

- Perhaps this is God's way of not only blessing him but preparing him for that which He's preparing for him, namely his hope after death.
- One reason I say this is because, when God tells Moses that he will be "gathered to his people," He is giving him the hope after death.
- This is the hope we as believers have when we die. We don't grieve as the rest of men who have no hope when they die.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 NIV (13) Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.

- As believers, our hope is that when we are absent from the body we are present with the Lord. Death won't have the final word.

15 Then Moses spoke to the LORD, saying:16 "Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation,17 who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be like sheep which have no shepherd."

- Moses knows he needs a successor to lead the people. Again, conspicuously absent is Moses complaining to God or blaming of God.
- In other words, we don't see him in any way blaming his anger on the Israelites back at Meribah or complaining that God isn't being fair.
- One reason for this is that Moses was more concerned about the Israelites having a leader after he's gone than he was for himself.

- I see Moses as humble meek and very forgiving. He has no bitterness or resentment towards the Israelites or, God forbid, God Himself.
- This is a must for anyone in a position of leadership. We must be men and women who possess these kinds of character qualities.

- There's something else here that can be easily missed at first. Notice how Moses submits to God in the selecting of his successor.
- He doesn't call together a committee to vote on someone. He doesn't even recommend anyone that he would like to see take his place.
- When it comes to letting God pick the one who will be the best choice, He will always choose the right one. This goes for marriage too.

18 And the LORD said to Moses: "Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him;
- It's interesting to note that the litmus test by which Joshua is selected as Moses' successor is he's a man filled with the Spirit of God.
- Perhaps it goes without saying but if we ever hope that we are going to be used by God, we have to be filled with the Spirit of God.

19 set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. 20 And you shall give some of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.

- It's important to know that just as God is preparing Moses, so too is He preparing Joshua many months in advance of Moses' death.

21 He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire before the LORD for him by the judgment of the Urim. At his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, he and all the children of Israel with him -- all the congregation." 22 So Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation.23 And he laid his hands on him and inaugurated him, just as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

- The public laying on of hands was a visible transferring of leadership before Moses died so that the Israelites could witness it.
- Absent doing it this way, there would have been unspeakable confusion, not to mention everyone with an agenda jockeying for position.